Southern Pacific Bulletin

MARCH 1922

COMMISSARY DEPARTMENT NUMBER

The Story Back of a Southern Pacific Menu

How the Highest Standard of Fare and Service is Maintained Over 11,000 Miles of Line, Despite the Peculiar Difficulties Encountered

DINNER is served in the dining cah. Fust call!"

As the train speeds along over Southern Pacific rails during the two or three hours following this welcome announcement, passengers saunter casually to the dining car. There they settle themselves comfortably in the chairs drawn invitingly back for them and run speculative eyes over the menu.

They may glance at the gleaming silver, the snow-white linen and the shining glassware and think that this is a pleasant way to pass part of the time of travel—the eating of a good meal, as well prepared and as well served as in the best metropolitan hotels, while an ever-changing landscape slips by.

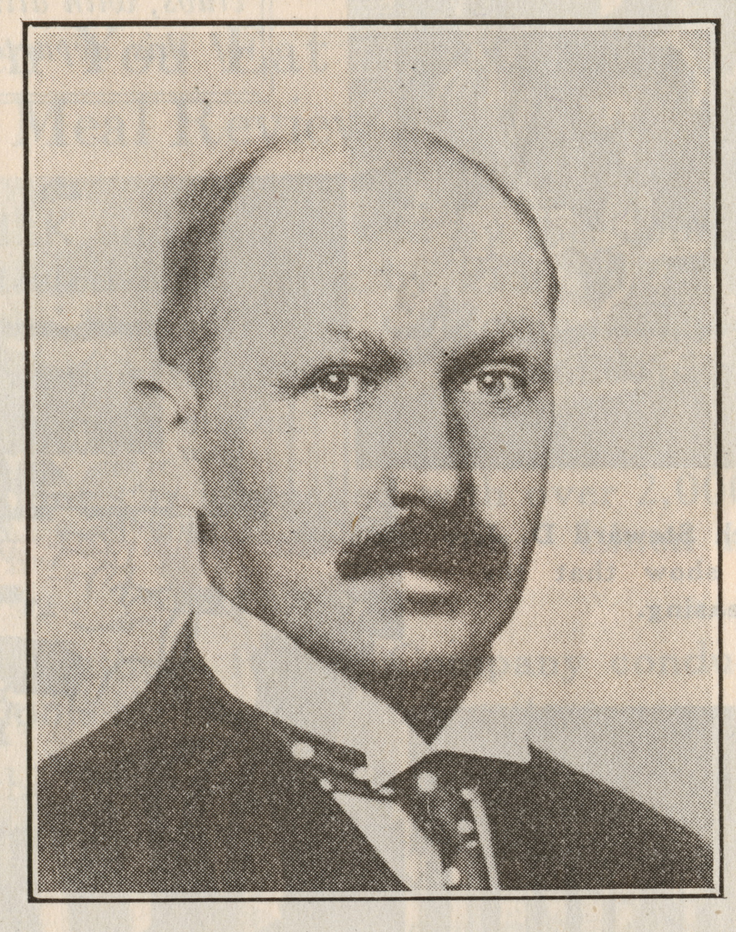
But few of them ever give an idle thought to the tremendous organization and the precision of action which is entailed to make such meals possible. In the dining car—"the scooting cafe" it has been called—we find the smallest, most expensive in cost of operation, despite scientifically planned economies, and the most interesting of any traveling restaurant in the world. Whether the traveler is journeying over the Sierra, a mile above sea level, or over the desert, in winter or in summer, he is served with every variety of food, and enjoys the choicest products of the market. He receives the service only to be had in the great hotels where every facility for pleasing is at hand, and the food is as well prepared and as tastefully presented. This in a car which measures only 77 feet by 9 feet! It is an achievement ranking with other American transportation triumphs.

The dining car service of the Southern Pacific Company represents progressive work by the Company through a period running over a quarter of a century, and intensive study of the peculiar problems involved. Its Commissary Department has charge of the functioning of the Company's dining cars, hotels, restaurants and railway clubs scattered over 11,000 miles of line. It works efficiently but quietly and many employes of the Company, no doubt, fail to grasp it's scope of operations, or what lies back of it all.

Modern Luxury

The modern traveler passing over the desert may have set before him during his meal in a Southern Pacific diner, purple black Loganberries, straight from Ogden, rich with cream from Guernsey cows to go with them; salmon grilled, and golden brown, as fresh as though just drawn from the waters of the Columbia, and pastry, rich and flaky, cooked by a chef as proud of his art as a legal light his mastery of the law. He does not think of the pioneers who followed the trail now traversed by the tracks, who faced starvation in their journey westward; nor does he think of the railroad days when meals could only be obtained at station restaurants in an "eat and run" style, and when mealtime was postponed if the train was delayed.

ALLAN POLLOK



Manager, Dining Cars, Hotels, Restaurants and Railway Clubs.

The modern traveler expects the best of service and the best of food, he wants to eat leisurely and in comfort. If these requisites are not met, he is not satisfied. The Southern Pacific Company's Commissary Department has met this standard through a mastery of details—details that have to do with service, sanitation, personnel work, purchasing of supplies, and economy. The last like the first is exceedingly important, for the prices charged our patrons must be reasonable. That they are reasonable is shown by the fact that despite the tremendous costs involved, the service is that of the best hostelries and the prices at least the same and usually lower.

The Southern Pacific Company's Commissary Department is directed by Allan Pollok, Manager of Dining Cars, Hotels, Restaurants and Railway Clubs. His jurisdiction extends over the Pacific and the Atlantic System Lines. The amount of business done by the department can be appreciated when it is realized that in 1920, in the dining cars 2,820,713 meals were served on the Pacific System alone, or 7,728 meals per day. This does not include the meals served on the ferries, or in the hotels, restaurants or railway clubs. When all the figures are complete the total for 1921 will show a slight reduction owing to the falling off in travel, due to business depression.

The dining car, it might be said in connection with these figures is growing in popularity with the traveling public, more people eating in the diners than at any previous time.

The Department operates 97 dining cars, one cafe car, and 12 cabinet lunch cars. Restaurants are located at San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Tracy and Oakland Pier, and hotels are maintained at Ashland, Ore., Truckee, Calif., and Bowie, Arizona. The railway clubs, where dining facilities are also open to the public, are located at Carlin, Imlay, Montello and Sparks, Nevada; Indio and Niland, California, and Gila, Arizona. Other clubs are located on the Pacific system at Tracy, Roseville and Dunsmuir, California and Tucson, and Yuma, Arizona.

In discussing the workings of the Commissary Department a few words as to the dining car itself may not be amiss. The dining car is built like a watch, every available inch of space being utilized to advantage, the thousand and one articles necessary for the operation of a diner being stowed away in such a manner that a casual observer would never suspect their presence. The amount of supplies, utensils and general equipment carried in the modern diner is so large that the uninitated might think that part of it would have to be carried on the roof. The dining car seats from 30 to 36 persons, depending on its size. At one end of the car is the kitchen, 6 feet 8 inches by 16 feet in size. On one side of the aisle in the kitchen is the long range with its oven, and the charcoal broiler. The ice chests, sink and table flank the aisle on the other side. In the ice chests the cold meats are separated from the raw meats, the steaks and chops from the roasts and all of these separated from the fish. The Commissary Department men have learned, through years of experience, the exact methods for keeping perishable commodities in first class condition and this is instanced in the way fish is handled. Fish is not carried in a chillbox but in a heavy packing of ice, being first wrapped carefully in freshly laundered linen, so that it does not come in contact with the ice itself.

Next to the kitchen is the pantry where the waiters come with their orders which are called through a fun-

"Here and There" Views of Commissary Work

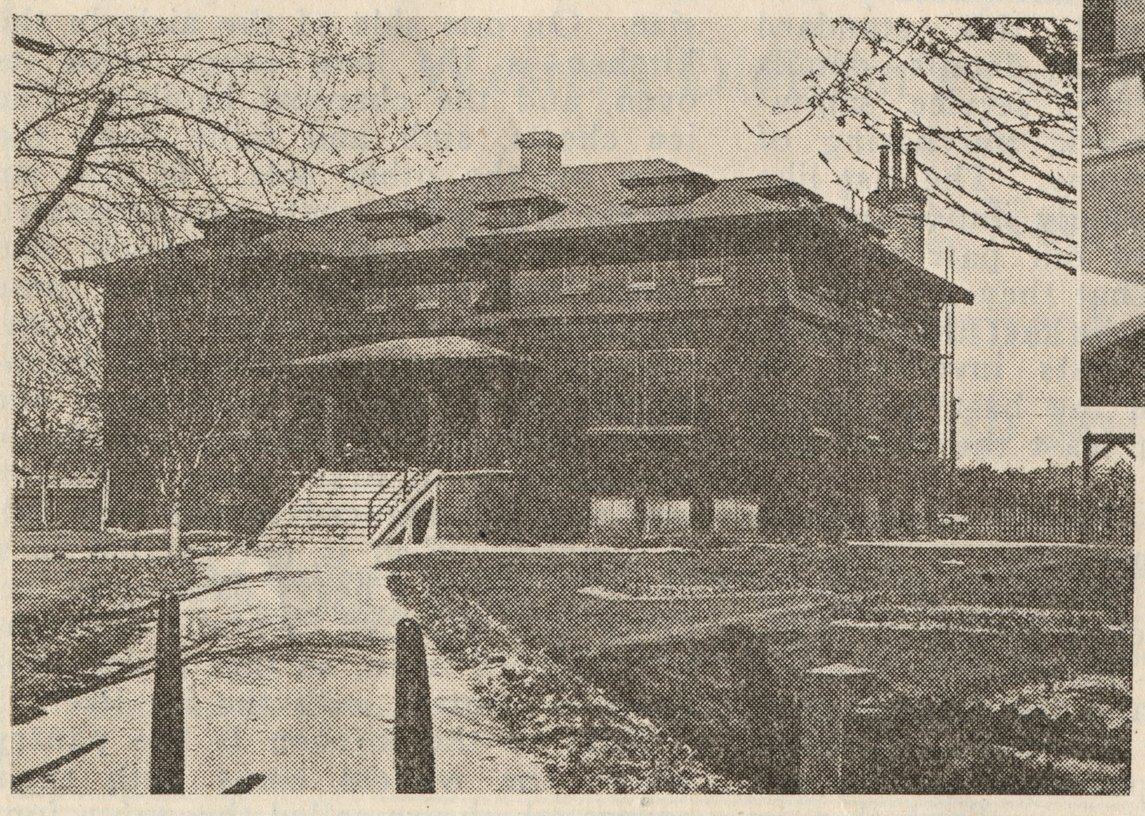
The real Irish linen, a detail that adds to the distinction of Southern Pacific dining car service, is always spotless. It is washed and ironed in the Company's well ventilated, sanitary laundry. Carefully systematized stores make the Commissary's complicated machinery run smoothly. Railroad clubs, with attractive buildings, are under jurisdiction of this department.

Here is the dining car on the "Owl," with Steward D. J. Reader in the background. Figures show that the popularity of the dining car is increasing.

A portion of the dining room of the Southern Pacific Hotel at Truckee. A glance through the many large windows at this time would meet a great expanse of drifted snow.

The Laundry operated by the Commissary Department at Oakland, shown here, is modern in every respect. Note how airy and well lighted it is.

A corner of the storeroom at the Los Angeles Commissary where the orders for stocking the dining cars are filled. Note the compartments at the left. The dining car for each train has one of these compartments which can be opened from the outside when the supplies are taken to the dining car.



This commodious building is the Southern Pacific's railway club at Roseville, Calif.

nel shaped aperture to the cooks. Between the pantry and the kitchen and under the "counter" is a cabinet heated from the range where the dishes are kept hot. The walls of the pantry are lined with closets and drawers on all sides. Here salad materials, relishes, butter, cracker, milk, cheese, condiments and those things not hot from the range are kept at the required temperature, despite the changes in seasons. Outside the pantry in the alcoves are closets for the linen and other supplies, and chill boxes containing perishable foods held in reserve. In the walls of the alcoves, also, are hidden compartments where the soiled linen is thrown.

Linen must be spotless

It is a strict rule that all linen must be spotless, and so a large amount is used each trip. On a three day run the car is stocked with over 2000 pieces of linen, including 220 table cloths, 1000 napkins and 250 doilies, besides aprons and waiters' coats. The waiters' coats are laundered free of charge by the Company. All linen, fresh or soiled, is stripped from the car at the end of a run and a new stock is issued. As a sanitary measure the napkins as they come from the iron at the Company's laundry at Oakland, Cal., are folded and placed in paper cartons, so that they come straight from the "mangles" to the passenger, untouched.

At the other end of the car in the alcove is the steward's desk, flanked by closets containing cigars, cigarettes, etc., as well as reserve supplies and soft drinks. Underneath the car, on each side are iced compartments where more perishable supplies are kept. These can only be reached when the train is not in motion. From 1000 to 2000 pounds of ice are used a day on a dining car, depending on the season.

Cleanliness is one of the cardinal principles of Southern Pacific dining car operation. Before going out on a run, the dining car, like other cars, is given a thorough cleaning by the car cleaners, every particle of dust being removed, the windows cleaned, the walls rubbed down, etc. The kitchen and pantry are always clean, and if a pasenger should inspect the the kitchen an hour after mealtime, he would never know that any meals hal been prepared there. At the end of each run all utensils are taken to the main commissary, placed in steam chests, live steam is turned on and they are completely sterilized.

Mark Twain, learning that statistics showed that a man runs less risk of injury to life and limb while travelling than while pursuing his usual course of life at home, remarked that he thought it would be a good idea to live on a railroad train and so prolong his life indefinitely. The mthods of sanitation followed by the Company in operating its dining cars are more complete than in any restaurant or hotel, and the remark of the great humorist might well be paraphrased to apply to eating in our diners.

Inspection and Instruction

The dining cars, like our restaurants etc., are closely watched by the Department's inspectors, although the word "inspector" should really be changed to instructors, as they teach the men, out of their greater experience, to do better work. The purpose of the inspectors is "not to search out deficiencies and dwell upon them," as Mr. Pollok, told the employes in a New Year's message, "but to offer friendly co-operation and constructive criticism." The dining car crews expect to be closely watched and are always prepared. The cars are always inspected on leaving a terminal and on arrival at destination, and usually at least once or twice en route. The dining car crews are old hands, and in fact it is because of their service and close association that they are able to get such splendid teamwork which makes the efficient operation of a diner possible. Crews remain intact for long periods, and the inspection is something of a game between the crew and the inspectors, as any old soldier, who is careful to keep the heels and backs of his shoes well polished and his pockets buttoned, will realize.

There are tricks of the trade not found in ordinary restaurants. The inspector can look at the inside of the metal caps of the salt shakers and never find any verdegris; he can unscrew the caps from the ketchup bottle and find the threads clean and shining; he can look into the spouts of the coffee pots and finl the same thing; he can rub his finger along the shelves of the chill boxes, top or bottom and always find them spotless. The table tops and draining boards must be scrubbed white. The discipline is that of a crack army organization and the morale of all concerned, as in the army, is the better for it. Every man unconsciously feels that there is an eye upon him—not an unfriendly eye but just an attentive look in his direction.

Training an S. P. Chef

The crew of a diner includes the steward, four cooks and five waiters, this large force being necessary to serve the passengers in the limited dining car space within a brief meal period. Cooking in a dining car is a field in itself and an ordinary cook would be lost in a car kitchen. Consequently the Southern Pacific chef is a man who has had long training and who has risen from the ranks, from fourth cook to third cook to second cook. The Company's "Book for Guidance of Chefs on Dining Cars" is carried by all kitchen employes, and traveling instruction chefs, who have reachel the pinnacle of dining car chefdom, school the kitchen force in the fine details of cooking. There is one traveling chef for the Northern District and one for the Southern. They travel with the weaker crews and standarlize the service.

The Commissary kitchens at Los Angeles and Oakland also serve as schools of instruction. Examinations for promotion are held once a month, the certificate of "Southern Pacific Chef" being the coveted prize. The holder of such a certificate is acquainted with 2000 recipes used on Southern Pacific diners, and knows the fine points of cookery from the seasoning of a ragout to the garnish-

When You Eat a Southern Pacific Meal Review These Facts

MILK and cream used by the Company are tested each week by Prof. M. E. Jaffa of the University of California. The butter-fat content is higher than the standard required by the various states.

A dining car is stocked with over 2,000 pieces of linen for a three days run. Linen must be spotless.

The Southern Pacific Company conducts special schools for its chefs and waiters.

All the meals served in dining cars are prepared in scientifically arranged kitchens equivalent in size to a room only ten feet square.

It costs the Company 69 cents before a patron orders his meal.

Last year 1,644,253 meals were served on the Company's ferries at San Francisco.

Only supplies of the best quality are purchased. "Seconds do not pay."

Southern Pacific kitchens are always ready for inspection. They are always clean.

Having read your Bulletin—Pass it along.

ing of a platter. Similar schools for waiters are conducted by the Company with the aid of two traveling instructor waiters. Before going to work on a liner they have bee ndrilled in serving in a practice car. "Suothern Pacific Graduate Waiter" certificates are also given after thorough schooling and examinations.

Realizing the dining car kitchen has the equivalent space of a room only ten feet square, one can appreciate some of the difficulties of dining car operation ,of which washing dishes is one item. Taking an average trip of the Sunset Limited, from San Francisco to New Orleans, recently, a total of 1,456 meals were served in four days. On the trip mentioned, 21,840 dishes were washed by hand b yone man in a sink 24 inches long by 18 inches wide by 10 inches deep. Statistics show that for every guest served in a diner 15 pieces of chinaware are used besides the numerous piecs of silver and the glassware. For service of tea alone, five pieces of chinaware are used.

The Steward a Diplomat

The steward is the direct representative of the Company in meeting the public. Mr. Pollok, in his New Year message to Department employes, said of the steward:

"His duties are arduous and exacting. He must have a good working knowledge of the technique of his business—he has to be a diplomat and a gentleman. He must have tact and patience, possess an easy manner and an easy working smile, and that is the kind of a steward we want, for our passengers cannot be handled brusquely or listlessly or uninterestedly. When they enter our dining car they become our guests. We have invited them to come and they have every right to expect a courteous and cordial interest in their wants."

People, while travelling, are apt to be more exacting concerning their meals than while at home. Their appetites may be listless through lack of exercise. Some people have not the faculty of amusing themselves and become irritable. They must be treated with the utmost tact. When the Department serves 250,000 meals in one month and receives only 19 written complaints, or from one person in 12,000, under these conditions, it can well be said that a great deal of credit must go to the steward. The many letters of praise received by the Company show how well they succeed.

The steward is responsible for the quantity and quality of the supplies received from the Commissary. He keeps the main office well informed as to the details of each trip, as to the ability of the cooks and waiters, qualities of supplies, comments of passengers and makes suggestions as to service improvements.

The buying of perishable supplies for the Commissary Department, which is under the supervision of a purchasing agent in San Francisco and one in Los Angeles, is an important branch of the business. The purchasing of non-perishable or "dry" supplies is done by S. M. Estabrook, Assistant Manager.

The Best of Everything

Supplies for the Commissary Department are purchased in large quantities and the Southern Pacific Company has the advantage of city hotels and restaurants in this branch of the business in that supplies can be obtained from a wide sweep of territory, extending from Portland to the Gulf states. Consequently perishable commodities can be brought quickly from the points where they are produced to perfection and the very earliest fruits and vegetables can be obtained as soon as they come into the markets. Supplies must be of the very finest quality for it is an axiom with the Department that "seconds do not pay." Patrons of Southern Pacific diners and resturants get the finest oranges and grape-fruit from California, alligator pears from Florida and California, Louisiana rice, Coachella Valley melons and cante-Utah celery, Imperial, Turlock and loupes, Fresno grapes and raisins, Hood River apples, etc.

To show the scope of the purchasing work a few figures will be of interest. The average daily consumption on the Pacific System, i. e. west of Ogden and El Paso, is as follows: Milk, 514 gals.; potatoes, 3,226 lbs.; cream, 172 gals.; butter, 597 lbs.; eggs, 803 dozen; beef, 2148 lbs.; coffee, 503 lbs.; apples, 23 boxes.

The Commissary Department is especially proud of its coffee. Coffee is purchased, freshly roasted, in sealed vacuum cans holding just the right quantity for one gallon of coffee, with the date of roasting stamped on the can .

The Department is extremely particular regarding the quality of milk and cream used. All milk, cream and butter is tested by the Department each day and the cream must have approximately 25 per cent butter fat content. The California State requirement is 20 per cent . In addition to the Department's tests, the milk and cream is tested each week by M. E. Jaffa, Professor of Nutrition, University of California. The department thoroughly investigates the sources of milk supply before making contracts, and the milk cream comes from the finest dairy herds in the West. One of the herds supplying the Company's diners is composed of registered Guernsey stock, many of the animals having been imported from abroad. The milk is bottled and sealed at the dairies and is not uncapped until placed on the tables.

Pure Syrup

Another indication as to the care the Department takes in obtaining supplies is the item of maple syrup. The Southern Pacific Company is the only company to obtain maple syrup in carload lots from Vermont. It is pure maple syrup, unmixed with sugar.

All supplies are carefully checked to prevent waste. They are checked when purchased, when transported to the Commissaries, when received at the Commissaries, when placed in the dining car "delivery bins" and finally by the steward when

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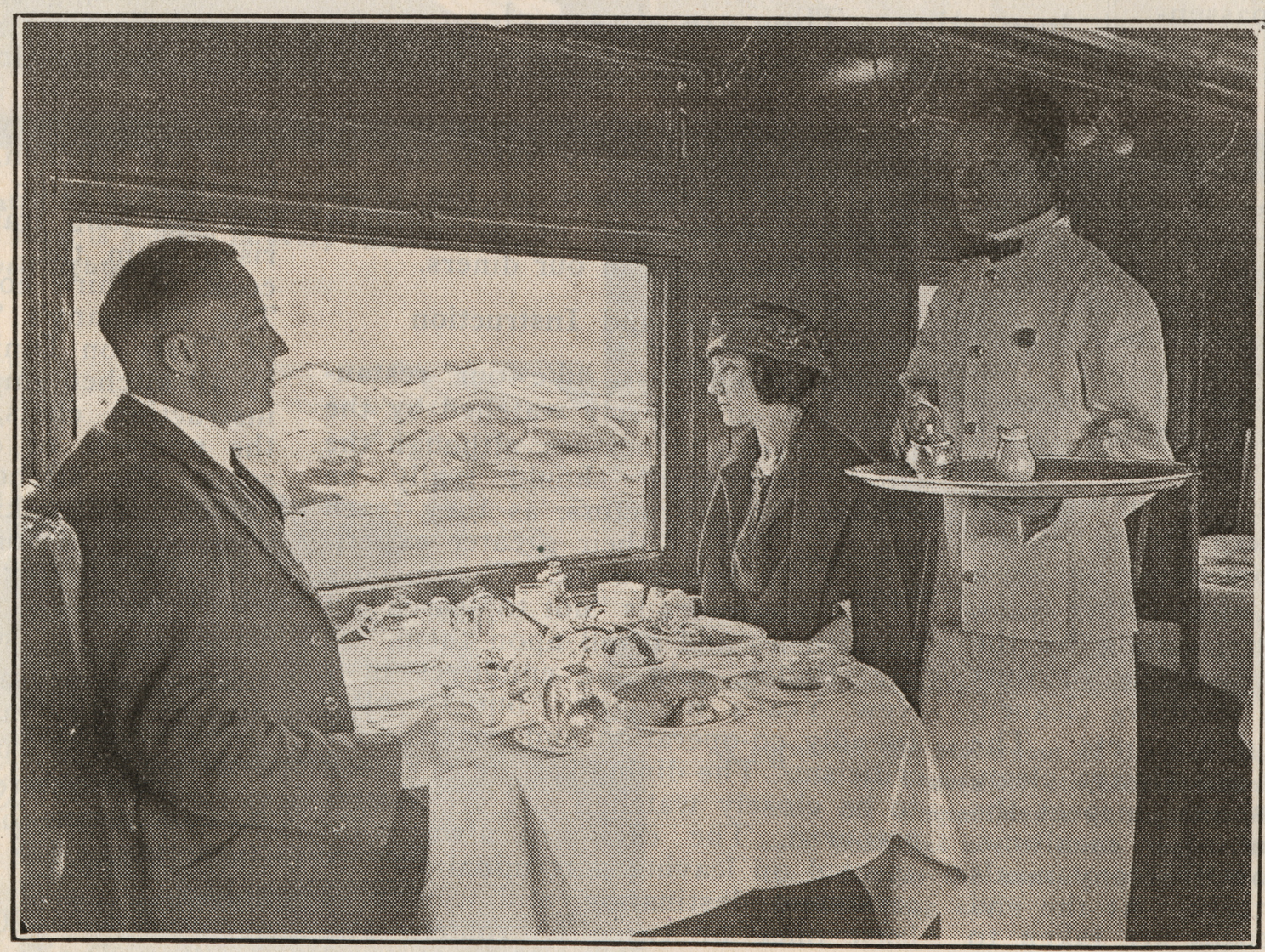


An opportunity to view a changing landscape while enjoying a well cooked and well served meal. The waiter here is Claude Harris.

STORY OF MENU

(Continued From Page 6)

taken to the dining car. The stewards are charged with the value of the supplies obtained, in dollars and cents, hand, and the amount used must balance with the supplies delivered to him.

The Department has a slogan "No Excuse for Small Portions," and is not concerned with the quantity of materials efficiently used on the tables, but it is concerned with the quantities of materials and equipment carelessly wasted, as this increases the cost, and costs must be kept down in justice to the public.

One of the big difficulties in making both ends meet in dining car operation is the fact that the revenues are restricted to three comparatively brief meal periods a day, while its expenses are continuous. The dining car force must be large to give the proper service under the difficult conditions. The dining car represents a $50,000 investment or the cost to build and equip it, and it must pay its proportion of operating expenses. It must be lighted, heated, kept in repair, supplied with ice and provided with every comfort and convenience found in a first class cafe.

Overhead Expense

The overhead expense of operating a dining car is 69 cents per meal. In other words it costs the company 69 cents before the patron has given his order, for department expenses alone, and not including food supplies operating costs such as the cost of hauling the car, heating it, or any return on the investment. This expense is divided as follows for each meal served, using 1921 figures:

Wages of crew	.38
Laundry and Linen	.07
Fuel for cooking	.015
Ice and watering	.05
Menus, stationary, etc.	.01
Maintenance of cooking utensils, dishes, silverware	.035
Handling supplies, stocking cars	.08
Interior car cleaning	.02
Superintendence and Accounting	.03
Total	.69

The main commissaries of the Department are located at Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Houston and El Paso, and representatives of the Department are also stationed at Portland and Ogden. The Oakland and Los Angeles commissaries are the largest and are representative, as to methods of operation, of all the commissaries.

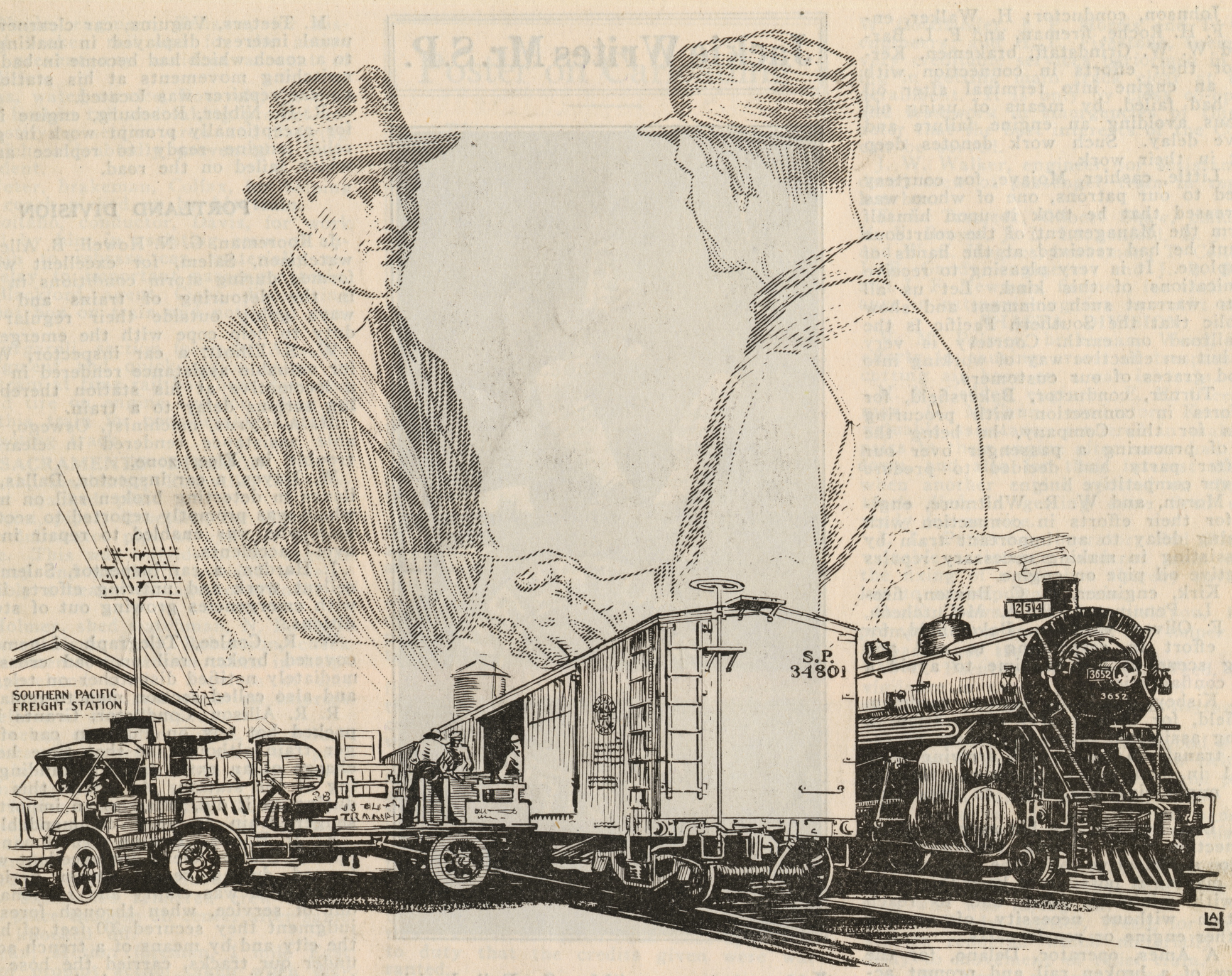
One function of the Commissary is to relieve the dining car crews, as well as the forces in the ferry boat restaurants, of as much work as possible, owing to the cramped quarters in which these crews have to operate. All meat is boned, trimmed, cut and made ready for cooking before delivery to the chefs. Stocks are prepared for soups and issued to the cars in gallon containers. Mayonnaise and French dressings are prepared and issued in quart Mason jars, and the Department is ready to back its dressings and sauces against the product of any one. Pie dough is made in the Commissary and issued to the cars to be kept in the chill boxes and matured for use. Prunes are cooked and issued in half gallon containers so that the quality can be uniform. Bread, biscuits and pies for the first meal on the road are also baked in the Commissary kitchens.

Dining Car Crews Aided

The Southern Pacific Commissary Department leads all other roads in doing as much preparatory work as possible before issuing foodstuffs to the dining car crews. The practice helps greatly in improving the service and tends towards standardization. It is the aim of the Department to prepare and cook the food in the same way, no matter on what part of the System the meal is served. Of course the chefs have latitude to exercise their individuality.

The Oakland Commissary, in charge of G. F. Klink, Assistant Manager, may be described in more detail since it is the largest and all the other Commissaries are operated on the same plan. Here are located the Commissary offices, the butcher shop and kitchen, in one building, and a great storehouse and a modern laundry in separate buildings. Plans are being prepared for the erection of a completely equipped bake shop near the main Commissary building; and a smoke house, where the Department will cure and smoke its own hams and bacon is now being constructed. In the Commissary building the butcher shop is being greatly enlarged, and

Southern Pacific cooks and waiters are carefully trained. At left are shown novices watching the action of an Instructor Waiter. Above at right are future chefs learning some fine points of cookery.



Shipper and Southern Pacific Join Hands
—and Set New Car Loading Record

The average carload on the Company's Pacific System in 1921 was 26.2 tons, a new high record in the Railroad's history.

Heavier loading in 1921 released to shippers hundreds of cars more than were available in 1920. It enabled the Company to move freight in larger units, with greater facility.

Thus increased efficiency of the Southern Pacific Company was made possible by the helpful cooperation of its patrons.

Both the Public and Southern Pacific Gain by Such Cooperation